



March 7, 2012

To: Cam Gordon, Chair, Elections Committee
Members of the Elections Committee

From: Casey Joe Carl, City Clerk

Subject: Harmonizing Precincts (2012-2022)

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To prompt discussion of precinct boundaries, the Clerk's Office (Elections Division) has developed a draft map—for discussion purposes only—that identifies potential precincts based on the preliminary ward maps generated by the Charter Commission/Redistricting Group.

Legal Requirements for Adopting Draft Precincts

The Minneapolis Charter Commission/Redistricting Group is responsible for redrawing ward and park district boundaries [City Charter, Chap. 1, §3]. These efforts are conducted in conjunction with the redistricting of other electoral boundaries following the 2010 census as provided in state law. The Charter Commission/Redistricting Group has generated preliminary ward and park district maps, which were submitted to public hearings conducted on February 29 and March 1, 2012.

It is the City Council, however, that is responsible for designating the boundaries of precincts within the city [City Charter, Chap. 2, §7]. Therefore, based on the preliminary ward maps generated by the Charter Commission/Redistricting Group, the Elections Division has prepared a draft precinct map for each of the thirteen wards, which is presented for discussion purposes only. The purpose for submitting a draft precinct plan is to prompt early consideration and discussion, since the City Council must complete its work and adopt election precincts by no later than Tuesday, April 3, 2012, in accordance with state law [Minnesota Statutes 204B.135, subd. 1 (for wards) and 204B.14, subd. 3(d) (for precincts)].

Budgetary Impact – Reduction from 131 to 117 precincts

As part of its budgetary reduction efforts, the Office of City Clerk proposed to reduce the total number of precincts within the city from 131 precincts to 117 precincts, or what amounts to the elimination of 14 precincts. That reduction was approved as part of the final 2012 City Budget. As a result, the department anticipates achieving a reduction of just under \$30,000. The Clerk's Office proposes to "harmonize" precincts across the thirteen wards to achieve the greatest level of consistency between and among precincts with respect to the average number of voters to be served per precinct; the overall compactness of precincts; the recognition and preservation of neighborhoods, where possible; and the conformance to established congressional, state, and local boundaries, as required by state law.

With an overall goal of establishing 117 precincts, divided equally among thirteen wards, the result is an initial standard of nine precincts per ward. Based on the 2010 General Election, Minneapolis has a pre-registered voter count of 226,980 citizens. When divided between 117 precincts, the result is about 1,900 voters served per precinct. The goal range for acceptable precinct pre-registered voter count is approximately 1,750 to 2,250 voters. Thus, based on raw numbers, the nine precincts per ward would each fall within the middle of that acceptable goal range.

Administrative Criteria for Drawing Draft Precincts

Based on the legal and financial parameters already described, the Elections Division sought to identify administrative criteria that could be used in drafting a precinct plan. The Clerk identified the following administrative criteria, which were used as the basis for preparing the draft precinct plan; specifically:

- (1) Recognize neighborhoods as the starting point for establishing proposed precincts;
- (2) Re-align precincts, as necessary, to reflect the number of qualified and registered voters (18+ years of age), which may require some neighborhoods to be combined or may require more than one precinct in a larger neighborhood;
- (3) Further re-align and/or adjust proposed precincts to reflect voter turnout/participation (election day) from the 2008 Presidential and 2010 Gubernatorial elections;
- (4) Further re-align and/or adjust precincts to reflect election-day registrations;
- (5) Divide the city into quadrants and adjust proposed precincts between proposed ward boundaries to account for population, geographical distances between precincts, common interests among defined neighborhoods, and other factors; and
- (6) To the degree possible, adjust proposed precinct boundaries to reflect potential (and preferred) polling places that meet all legal and administrative requirements.

Timeline

The City Clerk will work with each Council Member to adjust proposed precincts and to align these with the final congressional, legislative, and ward boundaries prior to the April 3rd deadline. The Clerk proposes to return a final draft precinct plan to the Elections Committee by no later than Thursday, March 29, 2012, in order to consider any final perfections that may be offered at that time by Council Members in advance of formal action by the City Council at its regular meeting on Friday, March 30, 2012.

ISSUE/ACTIVITY	DATES	RESPONSIBLE
Introduce draft precinct plan	March 7	City Clerk
Review and refine precincts in each ward	March 7 – March 26	Council Members
Final City Wards filed by Charter Commission	March 26	City Clerk
Precinct boundaries finalized in draft form	March 27-28	City Clerk
Final precinct plan presented	March 29	Elections Committee
Adoption of new precinct plan	March 30	City Council